

Newhaven Open Spaces Action Group

Notes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 3rd October, 2.00pm at the Hillcrest Centre Newhaven

1. Present: John Adams - NTC; David Clay - NCDA; Tracey Evans - NSN; Ian Everest - NTC; Sally Foote - NCDA; Andy Frost - LDC; Jessie Leamy - ESCC; James Newmarch - ESCC; Judith Ost - NTC; Dan Ross - LDC

2. Apologies: Graham Amy - Castle Hill Group

3. Preamble: DC explained the purpose of the meeting was to have an exploratory conversation to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of developing an open spaces trust for Newhaven, the issues and implications for each of the stakeholders and, ultimately, to establish a shared agenda.

4. Initial comments: J.O explained that local people want to have an input but this would necessarily entail their interaction with three tiers of local government, the voluntary and charity sectors as well as a compact with landowners.

AF and DR were not aware of whether a best value review of open spaces had been undertaken which might inform the discussion.

I.E questioned whether the development of a trust ought to wait until the outcomes of D.C's project were apparent. T.E explained that discussions about the trust had to be concurrent with the open spaces project.

J.N and A.F required clarity as to the nature and statutory functions of a trust.

A.F pointed out that there a few guarantees that a trust might not have the same degree of permanence as a local authority.

D.R could not envisage an organisation wishing to take on the complexity of functions that the relevant divisions of a local authority might.

There was a general reluctance to use the word 'trust' as the implicit connotations were indicative of a particular outcome that has yet to be agreed.

5. Aims and Objectives: DC suggested that rather than focus on the technicalities of structure and remit, at this point it might be more appropriate to consider what the objectives and functions of the body / vehicle / organisation might be. It was agreed the aims and objectives should include:

- An overall vision that would centre on conservation and preservation of Newhaven's open spaces

- To implement the Open Spaces Strategy for Newhaven (albeit after periodic reviews and updates)
- Community engagement
- To create links between the sites - physical links such as corridors and links through consciousness and awareness of the spaces
- To promote open spaces as venues for education, recreation, sport and play
- To explore the relationship between the open spaces and the history, culture and archaeology of Newhaven
- To promote and publicise the open spaces locally and regionally
- To seek funding

6. Functions: It was agreed the functions of the body should include:

- To bring people together for social / cultural celebrations of open spaces
- To assist and support existing voluntary groups working in the open spaces
- To facilitate further voluntary activity
- Partnership working with or commissioning services from local authorities

7. Representation: It was agreed that the group were not ready to discuss representation until a clearer picture of the organisation had emerged.

8. Actions:

- DC to provide the action group with a timeline for the life of his project at the next meeting
- JN to investigate the decision of Pebsham Country Park not to adopt trust status
- DC to examine the potential advantages and disadvantages of trust status
- DC to seek clarity from the Heritage Lottery regarding their definition of 'trust' and their requirements concerning the open spaces project.

9. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 21st November, 2.00pm at the Hillcrest Centre, Newhaven